



News Release

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Agencies Join Forces to Study School Air Quality *Project Looks to Improve Asthma Management*

(North Logan, UT) – Students, parents and school administrators at Greenville Elementary have teamed up with the Utah Asthma Task Force to continue the state’s commitment to study the effects of air quality on children’s respiratory health.

Based on a pilot project begun last year at Salt Lake City’s Hawthorne Elementary, students from Utah State University and staff from the Bear River Health Department will test students’ lung function and monitor the air quality both inside and outside North Logan’s Greenville Elementary. The results—knowing to what extent air quality effects lung function—will provide scientific support for guidelines released in 2004 and should improve decision-making for parents of children with asthma.

Carmen Sorenson, Greenville Elementary PTA President and mother of two children with asthma, one of whom is participating in the project, knows firsthand how air quality impacts asthma. “My children’s asthma is kicked into high gear when the air is bad,” said Sorenson. “I keep them indoors when the air is poor, because I know it will help them breathe,” Sorenson explains. “I am excited about this study, because every piece of education helps. If they can’t breathe, they can’t learn. It’s that simple.”

More than 200 Greenville Elementary families applied to participate in the study. “The health effects of air quality in Cache Valley are of great interest to both the medical and educational communities and we have had incredible support from the parents of children who attend Greenville Elementary,” said Dr. Edward Redd, a deputy director at Bear River Health Department. “Air quality continues to be a health concern and the outcomes of these studies will be helpful for both parents and school administrators across the state in their efforts to help those with respiratory diseases.”

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Air Quality Project timeline of major events and results:

- August 2004: Air quality guidelines released for schools, local health departments and the general public. Available at: www.health.utah.gov/asthma
 - Results: School districts implemented guidelines across the state.
- December 2004 – March 2005: Collected and compared indoor versus outdoor air quality at Hawthorne Elementary in Salt Lake City.
 - Results: Indoor air quality is almost three times better than outdoor air quality during inversions.
- January – March 2006: Collected and compared indoor and outdoor air quality. Tested lung function of approximately 60 students once per week for the length of the project to gauge how indoor and outdoor air quality affects respiratory health.
 - Results: Pending
- January – March 2007: Will collect and compare indoor and outdoor air quality and test lung function of approximately 100 students on a daily basis at Greenville Elementary.
 - Results: Expected fall 2007

A copy of “*Guidance for Schools: When to schedule indoor rather than outdoor activities based on the air quality in your communities*” and air quality fact sheets are available at www.health.utah.gov/asthma/guidance.html or by calling the Health Resource Line at 1-888-222-2542.

Participating partners: Utah Asthma Task Force, Utah Department’s of Health (UDOH), Environmental Quality (UDEQ), the University of Utah, Utah State University, Greenville Elementary (Cache Valley School District) and Bear River Health Department

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